

REMARKS

1. Applicant thanks the Examiner for the Examiner's comments, which have greatly assisted Applicant in responding.
2. **Claim Line Numbers.**

The Examiner noted that the line numbers in the claims do not correspond to the preferred format and concluded by saying that for ease of reference by both the Examiner and Applicant that all future correspondence should include the recommended line numbering.

While Applicant's understanding that such line numbering of claims is not required, Applicant has nevertheless formatted the claims according to the Examiner's preference. Applicant, however, respectfully requests that the Examiner cite the actual text in the MPEP that states as such.

3. **35 U.S.C. § 112.**

Claim 16

The rejection is moot because Claim 16 is canceled without prejudice hereinbelow. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

4. **35 U.S.C. § 103(a).**

(a) Claims 1-9 and 16

The rejection is moot because Claims 1-9 and 16 are canceled without prejudice hereinbelow. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

(b) Claims 11-15

The rejection is moot because Claims 11-13 are canceled without prejudice hereinbelow and amended Claims 14 and 15 are in allowable form in accordance with the Examiner's guidance. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

5. Claim Objections.

Claims 10, 14, and 15

The Examiner objected to Claims 10, 14, and 15 as being dependent upon a rejected base claims, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

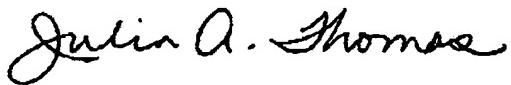
Therefore, Applicant has amended Claims 10, 14, and 15 as such. Accordingly, Applicant is of the opinion that Claims 10, 14, and 15 are in allowable condition. Therefore, Applicant requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

6. It should be appreciated that Applicant has elected to amend Claims 10, 14, and 15 and canceling Claims 1-9, 11-13, and 16 solely for the purpose of expediting the patent application process in a manner consistent with the PTO's Patent Business Goals, 65 Fed. Reg. 54603 (9/8/00). In making such amendment, Applicant has not and does not in any way narrow the scope of protection to which Applicant considers the invention herein to be entitled. Rather, Applicant reserves Applicant's right to pursue such protection at a later point in time and merely seeks to pursue protection for the subject matter presented in this submission.

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing, Applicant considers the present invention to be distinguished from the art of record. Accordingly, Applicant earnestly solicits the Examiner's withdrawal of the rejection raised in the above referenced Office Action, such that a Notice of Allowance is forwarded to Applicant, and the present application is therefore allowed to issue as a United States patent.

Respectfully Submitted,



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